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Now you have a real shot to "Turn America Around" (the national AFL-CIO theme) by changing the nation's direction at the polls this fall.

So what do you do now? Forgive the similarity to a Disney World commercial, but:

"You're going to Laborfest!" Show off your union colors in a parade. Kick back with a beer and a brat at

the lakefront. Dance to not one but two bands. Win at Bingo or in raffles. Make the kids laugh at magic shows.

And it's free. The many highlights start early the morning of Labor Day, Monday, September 1. Participants in more than 130 parade units assemble and socialize at Zeidler Union Square Park for the 11 a.m. parade to the Summerfest grounds.

Busses shuttle participants for free back and forth from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., with a final return bus at the tail-end of the parade.

Check for new signage and staging areas around Zeidler Park, Michigan St.

Laborfest continued Page 20

AFL-CIO MILWAUKEE LABOR PRESS

WWW.MILWAUKEELABOR.ORG

MILWAUKEE AREA LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO

Vol. 68, No. 8

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Thursday, August 28, 2008

(USPS 350-360)



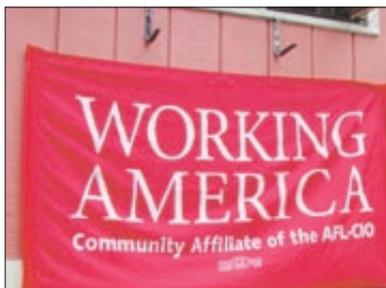
HONORING THE JOB – A big condo project gives its all-union crew thanks and a plaque (Page 17). So did the Marquette Interchange (Page 14).



MISTRUSTING TMJ – Employees take cause to the street. See Page 10.



PROTECTING THE VOTE – Atty. Ann Jacobs had stories to share at Times Theater. See Page 16.



SPREADING UNION VALUES – A new office opens in Riverwest. See Page 24.

Special Labor Day Edition

COPE steps up action in Sept. 9 primary

Weighing the power the Wisconsin legislature holds over Milwaukee's future, and how often it has been wielded for injury not aid, the Milwaukee Area Labor Council stepped up its endorsement game.

Its Committee on Political Education (COPE) insisted on required sessions for candidates, with experts (lawyers and union officials) detailing such key issues as prevailing wage and bankruptcy laws.

To send a clear signal that candidates must walk the walk before getting the backing, it upgraded its process of questionnaires and interviews, just in time for a surprisingly busy Sept. 9 primary.

Milwaukee districts have eight primary races in the Democratic column. Three are affected by – and three were actually caused by -- the mischief-making of defeated right-wing Republican Tom Reynolds.

A full explanation appeared in July's newspaper and is archived at www.milwaukeealbor.org

All this preparation took four separate sessions (two of them all-day affairs) devoted to legislative candidates in the Milwaukee area. Union members have far more than a slap on the back to point to in supporting these candidates. They now can be pressed to work for the candidates knowing how deeply they have been probed and vetted by their unions.



Attending a COPE educational event at Plumbers Hall, Sandra Pasch has earned union backing in the hotly contested Assembly District 22, being vacated by Sheldon Wasserman.

The seriousness of the effort was underlined Aug. 12 when MALC decided to publicize more recommendations for the Sept. 9 primary and Nov. 4 elections than its much larger COPE counterpart at the state AFL-CIO (which has statewide jurisdiction but didn't accept every MALC recommendation).

The intense Milwaukee process may reflect a different philosophy about endorsements. Having added two counties to MALC this year - Washington and Ozaukee - yet still in the midst of forming legislative and social ties with locals in those regions, the Milwaukee COPE thought it important to make a statement about the issues in play. Pragmatism is important,

COPE continued Page 6

Labor's truth squads key to Obama victory

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

In battleground states including Wisconsin, the AFL-CIO's Labor 2008 has been distributing hundreds of thousands of fliers at workplaces and in homes to newly introduce Sen. Barack Obama - and mainly to debunk with crisp facts the largely coordinated lies that he is not Christian, not American, not a veteran supporter of workers and not a flag-pin wearer.

Frankly, in the weeks leading up to the Democratic convention, I thought the AFL-CIO was overreacting.

Aren't most union members more knowledgeable about the candidates? Do they need this education?

Then again, historically, many voters don't start paying attention to presidential politics until after Labor Day. So they may be newly curious or naive, even after the most intensive primary season in American history.

In addition, the Democrats are seriously making this a national election, raising policy debates in states unused to such tenacity. Obama has definitely put 18 states in play, a third more than last time.

While residents of solidly red states don't see the demeaning commercials against the Illinois senator that we do, and even East Coast blue states aren't getting many of the ads, there are the Internet bloggers and televi-



Brought in by the Obama campaign, Illinois labor leader Margaret Blackshere talked to Wisconsin labor leaders about the Obama she has worked with all his public life. See Page 18.

Comment

sion pundits to provide free exposure. So rumors can abound.

But is education about Obama necessary when so much financial, health and retirement pain is creeping up the income ladder?

You would think the entire citizenry would know the deep trouble the war and the economy have mired us in. And it should be self-evident that John McCain has been an integral part of such failures.

Despite his self-promotion as a maverick - mainly bucking Bush when his own stature as a senator was questioned - isn't he sure to continue the path to unjustified war, the tax cuts for

Labor 2008 continued Page 19

Where is our animal survival about US trade?

By Sachin Chheda
Special to Labor Press

When his bride's father stood up to make a wedding toast, my friend's stomach dropped when his new in-law proclaimed: "Having a daughter is a lot like having a dog: You never know what they'll drag home."

Everyone loves a good dog, but nobody wants to be compared to one.

Still, putting unflattering comparisons aside, working peo-

ple can help change the world by acting like a good bird dog. Our canine friends watch intently for an opportunity, and when they see an opening, they jump into action. They encourage others to join in the hunt, and they are relentless on the chase, not letting up until their target is exhausted.

After working with -- or against -- elusive candidates on trade issues, these tactics are often the only ones that will move the fair trade agenda for-

ward. We need to relentlessly bring up trade questions, with specificity, and demand an actual answer every time.

Whether it is at a press conference, parade, fundraiser, church picnic or campaign speech, we have to hound candidates until we have them cornered, and lock down meaningful commitments to more progressive economic policies.

At the Wisconsin Fair Trade Coalition, we suggest the START method.

Start by asking a simple and specific question. Stay on one subject, and send the message you care about the response.

Task the target to respond. Give them time to tell you their take. Make it clear you want an answer.

Ask again. If you don't get anything, ask once more. If they give an actual answer, ask another, tougher follow-up question.

Record the response. Make sure you write down date and time, detail the nuances, and document their rationale.

Tell everybody. Email or call the Wisconsin Fair Trade Coalition, tell your Union leader, and let's work together to share the response with the media and voters.

Not sure what to ask? Here are a few good questions for any candidate for Congress (and useful with state legislators as well):

- 1. Do you support reviewing and renegotiating NAFTA, the North American Free Trade



The author is director of the Wisconsin Fair Trade Coalition and a frequent consultant to organized labor on trade issues, participating in the recent economic forum. Contact the Coalition at 414-344-1733 or info@wisconsinfairtrade.org, or check out www.wisconsinfairtrade.org.

Agreement? What about CAFTA? What about Permanent Normalized Trading Relations with China?

- 2. Do you support permanently eliminating "Fast Track" trade promotion authority, and giving Congress a larger role in deciding the contents of trade agreements?

- 3. Do you support enforcing labor rights and environmental standards the same way we enforce commercial provisions in trade agreements?

- 4. Will you co-sponsor the Brown-Michaud TRADE Act that lays out a plan for smarter globalization?

When trade activists are articulate, assertive and aggressive, our bird-doggin' can persuade a good candidate to tighten up a position, get a middle-of-the road candidate to come over to our camp, or force a bad candidate to quit stumping on free trade altogether. There's nothing to it but to do it:

Go out and bird dog on the trade issue!

More tips:

- Grab the candidate's hand, look her or him right in the eye, ask the question, and don't let go until you get an answer.

- Listen for specific reasoning and logic, so you and other activists can better lobby that representative in the future.

- Think "What would be a good follow-up question?" on the same subject, whether they respond yes, no or don't give any commitment.

- Ask "What will the audience get from this exchange?" The listening public should learn from your question as they listen, regardless of how it is answered.

- Call the candidate's campaign office to get a schedule. Your newspaper may also list town hall meetings.

- Have multiple questioners go to the event, entering and leaving separately, and sitting throughout the room. Discuss priority questions in advance.

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AFL-CIO MILWAUKEE LABOR PRESS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MILWAUKEE AREA LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO

633 S. HAWLEY ROAD MILWAUKEE, WI 53214

Published Monthly by the Milwaukee Area Labor Council AFL-CIO
www.milwaukeeelabor.org

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INTERNATIONAL LABOR COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION
AFL-CIO/CLC

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Telephone (414) 771-7070 FAX (414) 771-0509
E-mail: laborprs@execpc.com

MLPA
Midwest Labor Press Association

THE MILWAUKEE LABOR PRESS (USPS 350-360) is published once a month by the Milwaukee Area Labor Council AFL-CIO, 633 S. Hawley Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53214, and is also available by subscription for \$12 a year. Periodical postage paid at Milwaukee, WI.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the AFL-CIO MILWAUKEE LABOR PRESS, 633 S. Hawley Rd., Suite 110, Milwaukee, WI 53214.

The Publisher reserves the right to refuse or discontinue any advertisement which is deemed objectionable. Publication of advertisements is not to be construed as a personal endorsement nor are all ads necessarily from unionized companies or services of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council or any of its affiliates. COPY DEADLINE: Usually by noon 3rd Monday of each month except December (2nd Monday).

Every state has been crunched by US trade policy

The unbalanced trade policy with China since 2001 has had a devastating effect on US workers in every state. The Economic Policy Institute started out by investigating what was known about the extent of the impact on the Midwest, but its focus led to a new map (See at right), a much broader analysis and then more devastating conclusions than even an educated public realizes.

The map shows how between 2001 and 2007, 2.3 million jobs were lost or displaced, including 366,000 in 2007 alone, but that was true for every state - jobs displaced by the growth of the US trade deficit with China, which increased from \$84 billion in 2001 to \$262 billion in 2007.

Growing China trade deficits between 2001 and 2007 eliminated jobs in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Even counting jobs created after elimination, jobs displacement exceeded 2% of total employment in Idaho, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Oregon, California, Minnesota, Vermont, Texas, and Wisconsin.

The effects of growing trade deficits with China have been felt so widely that no area has been exempt from their impact.

While traditional manufacturing states such as Wisconsin, Tennessee, and the Carolinas were certainly hard hit, EPI agreed, so too were states in the tech sector such as California, Texas, Oregon, and Minnesota.

Rapidly growing imports of computers and electronic parts accounted for almost half of the \$178 billion increase in 2007 and eliminated 561,000 US jobs. Idaho, which lost an estimated 9,000 jobs in computer and electronic products alone, was the hardest-hit state in the country in terms of share of total state employment.

Now free traders have argued that China's entry into the World Trade Organization would improve the US trade deficit with China and create good jobs in the United States. But those promises have gone unfulfilled,

notes EPI analyst Robert Scott. The total US trade deficit with China reached \$235 billion in 2006. Between 2001 and 2006, this growing deficit alone eliminated 1.8 million U.S. jobs.

The world's biggest retailer, Wal-Mart, was responsible for \$27 billion in US imports from China in 2006.

In one period of time -- 2001 to 2006 -- the EPI calculates that Wal-Mart's trade deficit with China alone eliminated nearly 200,000 US jobs.

Especially after the Olympics, it is important to note what Wal-Mart's huge reliance

on Chinese imports illustrates. The amazing growth in that county has come with slow improvements for the workers there and massive pain for the workers here.

Many powerful economic actors in the United States benefit from China's policy of maintaining an undervalued yuan, its abuse of labor rights, and other fair-trade norms.

Wal-Mart's benefit, however, is not the country's gain, as these policies have contributed directly to the ever-growing trade deficit that imperils future economic growth.





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Labor Press wins top award

By **Lynnda Guyton**, Editorial Assistant

The 2008 Midwest Labor Press Association's annual conference was held in Waterloo, Iowa, in June and awarded five honors, including the association's highest, to the AFL-CIO Milwaukee Labor Press.

Attending for the newspaper was Lynnda Guyton, editorial assistant and also an officer in the MLPA. Members of the MLPA are labor communicators from various organizations throughout the Midwest.

The objectives of the MLPA are to increase the effectiveness of the labor press -- print, radio, TV and web in the Midwest Region, Canada as well as the United States. It provides education, promotion and interchange, supporting the goals of the labor movement.

As part of the activities each year, the Eugene V. Debs Banquet is held to present the Debs award to someone associated with the hosting city who has demonstrated excellence and dedication to the ideals of the labor movement, and also to honor members in a variety of contest categories.

This year the Debs award was presented to Thomas J. Vilsack, the former Iowa governor and briefly Democratic presidential candidate.

The Milwaukee Labor Press was the recipient of five awards including the first place Don Dalena Award for General Excellence which is a wooden plaque that will join the others that were won in 2004 and 2005. The winning entry for this category

was the February 2007 issue. Labor Press also received certificates for 2nd place Best Front page, 2nd place Best Photo Collage, 3rd place Best Individual Photo and 3rd place Best News Article.

Some of the classes taught at this year's conference were Labor History, Using Google for Searches, Microsoft Publisher, Tools for Improving Your Writing, and Setting up a Website. Each year there are new classes added.

There is no better way to get our message out than through the media. With the presidential election coming up in November, it's important that members know the differences between the candidate positions, noted Guyton in accepting the awards. The Milwaukee Labor Press is dedicated to keeping unions informed.

In addition to the Milwaukee Labor Press there were several other news outlets represented from Wisconsin: MLPA President Paul Beimborn of Operating Engineers 310; Debra Kosloske, WFNHP; Rich Hinderholtz CWA 4603, and new member Linda Greene of AFSCME Local 33.

Guyton, who is Wisconsin's MLPA state vice president, invites and encourages new members to join. Next year's conference will be held in St. Paul, Minnesota. Membership is open not only to labor newspapers but also to those who provide communications via the website, TV or radio.

Contact her at the Milwaukee Labor Press, 633 S. Hawley Road, #110 Milwaukee, WI 53214, 414-771-7070 or email lynnda@milwaukeeelabor.org



Thomas Vilsack, former Iowa governor and also once a Democratic presidential candidate, with Lynnda Guyton as she was presented the Labor Press award by MLPA President Paul Beimborn (right).

Official Notice

New officers were elected August 13 at the Port of Milwaukee Offices of the International Longshoremen Association Local 815 ACD, GLDC, AFL-CIO. The officers will be installed Sept. 10.

The new Business Agent and Financial Secretary-Treasurer is Thomas Reitzner, succeeding a retiring labor officer familiar to the Milwaukee community, Doug Kubic. Other officers elected to two-year terms are President: Philip Smith, Vice President: Frank Perea, Recording Secretary: Lee Schlund, and trustees Joe Smith and Tom Schwark.

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Making worst of times the best of times

By David Newby

Special to Labor Press

Charles Dickens' classic novel "A Tale of Two Cities" was written nearly 150 years ago. It's about a time of great turmoil and immense change in Europe. Its opening lines are:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness... it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us....

What could better describe our situation on Labor Day 2008?

The worst of times? Certainly since the Depression of the 1930s. Consider the following:

- We are losing half a million family-supporting manufacturing jobs every year, over 3 million since George Bush became president!

- Wisconsin has lost over 100,000 manufacturing jobs since 2000, over 40,000 of them to China.

- Wisconsin has lost over 25,000 manufacturing jobs since 1993 due to NAFTA alone (the US has lost over a million).

- Our trade deficit is now \$711 billion a year; \$256 billion of that trade deficit is with China.

- Median household income, adjusted for inflation, is not increasing. It's falling! In fact it fell about 2%, or \$1,000, between 2000 and 2006.

Comment

A special Labor Day message from the president of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO

- The number of Americans without health insurance was 38 million when George Bush took office; today 47 million Americans have no health insurance-and the cost of health insurance for those of us who have it has doubled.

The list of statistics that illustrates the decline in living standards for 90% of the American people goes on and on.

So how could these also be the best of times?

Because more of us understand what is happening to our country. Because gradually more are realizing that it doesn't have to be this way. Because union members all over America are getting better organized than we've ever been to make sure that "business as usual" comes to a sudden halt.

And because in the elections this November we have the best opportunity to make major changes in our state and national policies and priorities than we've had in many decades.

If we take these elections seriously and work like we've never worked before, we can turn America around.

If we elect Barack Obama as president and increase the pro-working family majority in the US Senate, we can:

- Rapidly end the disastrous war in Iraq, which is driving us ever further in debt and which



Newby was one of the speakers invited by the Association of Flight Attendants this summer to its board of directors meeting – and then to address the large vigil crowd protesting Midwest Airlines' cutting union jobs almost in half.

makes it impossible to deal with the serious social and economic problems we have here at home;

- Move quickly to change our health care system so that no one goes without the care they need;

- Change the economic and tax priorities of our country so that we who work for a living see our standard of living rise and once again have a realistic hope that our children will be even better off than we are;

- Change our trade policies so that they benefit workers here and abroad, not the multi-nation-

al corporations that divide workers against each other and drive us into a race to see just how far wages in all countries can be reduced;

- Restore fairness to our labor laws so that if a majority of workers at a workplace want a union (and more than half say they do), they'll get it - without the employer interference and intimidation they face today.

The possibilities for change in Wisconsin are equally exciting. If we do our job and elect a strong progressive majority in our State Assembly - and keep

our progressive majority in the Senate - then we can make big changes here, too. We could be the first to guarantee that everyone in our state has affordable, comprehensive, quality health care, just like we were the first to adopt a Workers Compensation system about 100 years ago.

We can make our tax system fair so that every person (and every corporation) pays their fair share and the burden on the middle class is therefore reduced. We can invest in the education of our children and make sure we have the best-trained, most skilled workforce in the world.

We can make so many changes that would improve our standard of living and our quality of life - for us, but also for our children and grandchildren.

But change does not happen by accident. If WE don't make positive changes for working people, the rich and powerful will keep on making changes that benefit only THEM.

Which way change goes depends on US.

We can continue to have the worst of times.

Or we can rise up and experience the best of times.

Advantage builds a leader

Ken Kraemer has been hired by the Construction Labor Management Council of Southeast Wisconsin (CLMC), known for its Building Advantage "union marketing cam-

paign," as the new executive director. He has a quarter century experience in the construction industry as a journeyman, union organizer, lobbyist and contractor.

"Ken is a solid businessman who has a sound understanding of the benefits labor and management collaboration brings to the union construction industry," said John Topp, the former Building Advantage executive director.

"I am confident the transition will be smooth and efficient, and am looking forward to serv-



New exec director Ken Kraemer

ing as an advisor to the CLMC board."

When Topp took over as chief executive officer at the Allied Construction Employers Association (which helps negotiates contracts for many unions in construction), the CLMC was already searching for someone like Kraemer with experience in all facets of the work-site.

The CLMC is made up of over 20 trade unions, six management organizations and hundreds of signatory contractors that all contribute to the Building Advantage marketing effort.

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COPE

From Page 1

said one member of COPE, but so is "speaking up even when chances are slim."

There are also examples where union members collectively intend to work for a candidate whether the state AFL-CIO agreed or stood aside.

That resulted in four recommendations beyond what the state endorsed.

The biggest for Sept. 9 was Sandra Pasch in Assembly District 22 to replace Sheldon Wasserman. The Democrat who takes the most votes among four contestants in the assembly primary is a shoo-



in for the seat. *See story Page 9.* But there were district numbers new to MALC as well. One

is the backing of Torrey Lauer in the Germantown-Menomonee Falls region of Assembly District 24, traditionally Republican but vacant this year while attracting four candidates on the Republican side and two on the Democratic side for September 9.

The other additions don't show up until the November 4 ballot: Independent Clyde Winter, an extreme underdog against extreme rightwing Glen Grothman in Ozaukee-Washington counties' Senate District 20, and David Hucke, also in a steep uphill battle against incumbent Leah Vukmir in Assembly District 12. That district seesaws Butler, Brookfield, Wauwatosa, Elm Grove and a sliver of West Allis.

For Nov. 4, the biggest legislative race is shaping up as a battle of money, issues and experience between labor endorsed Sheldon Wasserman (seeking to move up from the Assembly) and sitting District 8 State Sen. Alberta Darling, who has been steering much further to the right than when she was first elected in the North Shore area.

Up till now, much of this contest has been radio talk nonsense about who's doing the most doors and whether Wasserman, a physician, made negative com-

ments about Darling's health (he did not; but he sure found much of her platform sickly). But as the election gets closer, this one will get testy and may be the most competitive race for the state senate.



A number of unopposed incumbents were also endorsed for Nov. 4 and the Milwaukee and state AFL-CIO may add others closer to that election. Backed so far:

The Senate: Lena Taylor in District 4, Spencer Coggs in District 6.

The Assembly: Peggy Krusick in District 7, Josh Zepnick in District 9, Fred Kessler in District 12, Jon Richards in District 19.

However, Milwaukee labor is going against the incumbents in three races.

In Senate District 8, Sheldon Wasserman is the challenger against Republican incumbent Alberta Darling.

Milwaukee labor is supporting David Hucke over Leah Vukmir in Assembly District 14.

Glen Brower received an enthusiastic nod from both COPE groups over Republican Mark Honadel in District 21 (which includes Oak Creek, South Milwaukee and two wards of the city of Milwaukee).

-- Dominique Paul Noth



Several candidates who attended the education session didn't win backing from Milwaukee's COPE, but here are two longshots who did: Clyde Winter (background) and David Hucke.

Calendar

For updated master list of events, visit www.milwaukeeelabor.org

Monday, September 1

Labor Day! Laborfest!
Downtown Parade, 11 a.m.

Summerfest grounds, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday, September 3

MALC Delegate Meeting

6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

Thursday, September 4

Labor 2008 Walk and Chili Cook-Off
4-8 p.m., Yatchak Hall, 633 S. Hawley Rd.

Thursday, September 18

Labor Kick-Off Rally for United Way
Includes Schaefer Community Service Award
6 p.m., Center of Excellence,
3841 W. Wisconsin Ave.

Wednesday, September 24

MALC Executive Council
2 p.m. 633 S. Hawley Rd.

Wednesday, October 1

MALC Delegate Meeting
6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

Kicking in for United Way

Labor annually makes a big push to support the agencies of United Way through workplace campaign, special events, other generosity and treasury gifts from area unions and locals.

The launch is the official Labor Kickoff Rally. It will be held starting at 6 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 18, at the Center of Excellence, 3841 W. Wisconsin Ave.

The kickoff includes food, speeches, dignitaries, gifts from unions -- and announcement of the most prestigious community award offered union members, named in honor of a legendary labor and United Way leader.

The annual Werner J. Schaefer Labor/United Way Community Service Award is given each year to a union member in the four-county region who reflects outstanding community service as a volunteer, resource or trainer.

Nominations for the Schaefer honor can be submitted until September 14. A written explanation, nomination form and when possible a photo should accompany nominations, which are voted on by a special labor committee.

Send nominations to AFL-CIO Community Services, MCLC, 633 S. Hawley Rd., Suite 106, Milwaukee, WI 53214.

To help union efforts for United Way or offer nominations for the award - or to find out what field mobilizers can do for workers in trouble - contact

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414.771.9830 / annieaflcio@sbc-global.net

OR Mike Balistriere -
414.771.9829 / mikeaflcio@sbc-global.net

OR Jay Reinke -
414.771.9828 / jayaflcio@sbc-global.net



MALC Vice-President Annie Wacker (right) and other labor leaders hosted a luncheon with United Way executives at Saz's on State Street to plan unions' key role in the community campaign.

HAVE A SAFE LABOR DAY!

www.milwaukeeelabor.org

Scott Redman, a member of both the MALC executive council and its COPE committee, took the podium (left) at his own Plumbers Hall to introduce the lawyers and other specialists offering nuts and bolts of labor issues to legislative incumbents and candidates. Among the dozens of candidates listening attentively were (below from left) veterans Leon Young, Spencer Coggs and Jon Richards. Only Young faces opposition in the September 9 primary.

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Defending labor's choices keeps districts busy Sept. 9

There were 14 endorsements in all by both the Milwaukee and state COPEs looking at the metropolis, but it's the September 9 primary that gets emphasis here because it's fast upon us.

Three of the eight Assembly primary races probably wouldn't exist were it not for the campaign literature cloned and printed by Republican Reynolds.

Here are the respected labor-endorsed incumbents who need supporters at the polls Sept 9:

District 10 - Annette (Polly) Williams. Her region extends north into Glendale and south past Burleigh St, and then goes from 18th St. east to the Milwaukee River.

District 15 (including both West Allis and West Milwaukee areas) -- Tony Staskunas.

District 17 (central North Side from 92nd St. east to 44th St.) -- Barbara Toles

Then there are three races where Reynolds' efforts were a factor but there would have been a Democratic primary anyway. Labor has endorsed the incumbents in all three:

District 8 - veteran Pedro Colon, whose serious opposition, Laura Manriquez, stems from a dispute with Esperanza Unida. Another opponent used Reynolds' program.

District 16 -- Leon Young, facing several opponents in a district (one using Reynolds'

stuff) that sweeps down from Locust Ave. to Tory Hill and east from 27th St. to the Milwaukee River.

District 20 -- Christine Sinicki, a veteran champion of union issues and a frequent presence at labor rallies, challenged by multiple candidates (one Reynolds-like) in a district that includes the Bay View area of Milwaukee, plus Cudahy and St. Francis.

Related story Page 9

Among the experienced and union-supported legislators being challenged Sept. 9 by ostensible Democrats are (top right) Barbara Toles, (middle) Tony Staskunas and (bottom) Christine Sinicki. Only Pedro Colon (not pictured), Leon Young and Sinicki face more than one primary opponent.

BELOW: Polly Williams may have been quizzical about facing a Tom Reynolds supported challenger Sept. 9, but, as she assured COPE interviewers below, she is hardly unprepared.



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ENDORSED CANDIDATES SEPTEMBER 9 PRIMARY

*All Wisconsin Assembly Races
on the Democratic Side*

District 8 -- Pedro Colon (incumbent)

District 10 -- Annette (Polly) Williams (incumbent)

District 15 -- Tony Staskunas (incumbent)

District 16 -- Leon Young (incumbent)

District 17 -- Barbara Toles (incumbent)

District 20 -- Christine Sinicki (incumbent)

District 22 -- Sandra Pasch, open seat

District 24 -- Torrey Lauer, open seat

NOVEMBER 4 ELECTION

US PRESIDENT

Barack Obama, Democrat

US HOUSE DISTRICT 4

Gwen Moore, Democrat

Wisconsin Senate

District 4: Lena Taylor, incumbent unopposed

District 6: Spencer Coggs, incumbent unopposed

District 8: Sheldon Wasserman, Democrat, challenger.

District 20: Clyde Winter, Independent, challenger.

Wisconsin Assembly

District 7: Peggy Krusick, incumbent

District 9: Josh Zepnick, incumbent unopposed

District 12: Fred Kessler, incumbent unopposed

District 14: David Hucke, Democrat, challenger

District 19: Jon Richards, incumbent unopposed.

District 21: Glen Brower, Democrat, challenger

Milwaukee area candidates must complete a process of questionnaires and interviews even to be considered, and recommendations require a two-thirds agreement on the Committee on Political Education (COPE) of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, representing all member unions, locals and constituency groups.

The choices are certainly not binding, but they represent considerable scrutiny on working family issues, campaign commitment and support of key labor goals. Union households are one of the most committed voting segments in the nation to turn up at the polls – in this case from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, September 9. This is followed by a general election Tuesday, November 4.



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What every woman wants seems to be a raise

A raise is the most desired change in women's work lives, overtaking health care, which was the top issue in the previous survey. That's according to Working America's Ask a Working Woman survey. Compiled and released June 25, the survey report digested data from an online survey of 12,000 respondents out of 20,000 women who participated.

Half of respondents chose a 10% raise over affordable, high-quality health care (a close second) as making working women's lives easier. Child care was also a popular need, but neither it nor health care topped a basic raise, particularly since many women also cited pay inequity by gender.

Their viewpoint is backed up by government surveys that put women 30-40% behind the pay of men in similar occupations. Those reports made headlines nationwide about why the workforce is losing its women.

Given the economy, if work-

ing women had more available time, they are most likely to say they would work another job, ahead of spending more time with friends and family, or doing exercise, or even getting more sleep.

Working women also desperately need a break, according to the survey. They are talking to their co-workers more than their children or friends. They have

little time for themselves.

Thirty-seven percent say they work during their breaks or have no breaks.

In spite of their lack of personal time, they are most likely to say they would work another job if they had free time.

Saddled with debt and facing rising prices, working women are using their credit cards to pay for durable goods

and everyday items. Six in 10 respondents have at least some credit card debt, and many won't be able to pay off their credit cards in the near future. A quarter say they will be able to pay off their balance within the next year and 12% say within the next two years, 18% say in more than two years. And 6% say they will never be able to pay off credit card debt.

This survey has been conducted in various forms since 1997. For full survey results, visit www.workingamerica.org/

Along similar lines, much publicity has been given to statistical evidence from the Economic Policy Institute of how women are leaving the workforce because the jobs stink, which is actually a reversal of trends in the 1990s.

The downward trend, the EPI evidence and the significant concerns of women leaving the US workforce were actually highlighted on the front page of the New York Times.

It turns out the exodus has more to do with lousy jobs than a desire to stay home with the kids.

As reporter and author Louis Uchitelle wrote in the piece: "After moving into virtually every occupation, women are being afflicted on a large scale by the same troubles as men: downturns, layoffs, outsourcing, stagnant wages or the discouraging prospect of an outright pay cut...."

"Pay is no longer rising smartly for women in the key 25-to-54 age group. Just the opposite, the median pay -- the point where half make more and half less -- has fallen in recent years, to \$14.84 an hour in 2007 from \$15.04 in 2004, adjusted for inflation. (The similar wage for men today is two dollars more.)"

While hardly good news, the information could help force a recognition of fundamental economic problems facing both genders.



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LOCAL 215 • AFL-CIO

AFT, AFSCME lead East Side push for Pasch

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

With the best credentials and the proven community leadership abilities, Sandra Pasch wasn't a tough choice for Milwaukee labor. The quality of her opposition and the size of their bankrolls make things more difficult in Assembly District 22, an open seat because of Sheldon Wasserman's move toward the State Senate.

Pasch, for 15 years an assistant professor at Columbia College of Nursing, has the backing of DA John Chisholm and other law enforcement experts because she founded and then coordinated the crisis intervention projects that teach officers how to handle mental health and other situations.

Long known as a health policy expert and a legislative planner on several fronts, she is the most open advocate among the candidates of the effort by nurses at Columbia-St. Mary's to organize a union.

Yet her desire to mix it up on the political differences and capabilities among the candidates has struggled for attention. There have not been enough



Sandra Pasch works through labor issues sharing a table with veteran members of the Assembly she hopes to join: Fred Kessler and (right) Christine Sinicki. Having survived broken bones, Pasch now has to carry through against some money-wielding opposition.

free-form forums in this district, and there has been a flood of four-color four-page mailings from Andy Feldman (a New Hope anti-poverty consultant with a Harvard public policy

degree, whom friends say returned to his hometown largely to run for office) and particularly from Dan Kohl (long a Milwaukee Bucks executive who prefers to remind voters of his support of SEED, the boarding school concept for low-income students).

There's actually a fourth Democrat in the contest -- Guy Johnson (the Shorewood village president connected to UWM) but he hasn't been doing much campaigning

This is described as a winner-take-all contest among Feldman, Kohl and Pasch, with Kohl given the edge in deep pockets and name recognition (he is the nephew and maybe would-be heir to you-know-who in the US Senate).

Pasch is husbanding her

resources for mailings closer to the election. But Kohl and Feldman had the funding to start their mailings in July and they have been popping in lit drop after lit drop (four from Kohl in one week). These are Photoshopped images, full of happy children and earnest seniors and, frankly, generic quotes about the need for health care and education reform.

There is a danger in assuming that the bulk of voters in this district -- River Hills, Fox Point, Glendale, Whitefish Bay, Shorewood, and four city wards -- are impressed by such spend-

ing, which is unusual in an assembly race. Many candidates are lucky to strap together enough cash for one earnest set of legislative plans, not these series of big headlines, childhood photos and computer icons. The rich might not notice how unusually heavy this mailing blitz is, and those struggling with the economy might be offended.

Kohl has also financed several phone "surveys" in the district, which some recipients felt were push-pull polling, steering residents to answer in his favor.

Aside from an inordinate amount of money represented in this assembly race, all three busiest candidates are sincere in person, have some similar general positions and are emphasizing the thousands of doors they have knocked on in person.

Each can claim some bragging rights in these neighborhood patrols (though it's hard to do doors in River Hills -- no sidewalks). But the hands-down winner of any perseverance contest would be Pasch. She suffered a pelvis fracture on slippery steps early in the campaign. For months she was pushed to doors in her wheelchair by family and youthful campaigners, then graduated to crutches and now she is back on her feet -- probably knocking at your door this minute.

There might be some poetic justice if she wins, given the importance of health care as an issue. Wasserman, whom she's seeking to succeed, is a physician -- and she would be the third nurse in the Legislature.

HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

THE INCREASED RISK OF SKIN CANCER, MEANT THE BEACH WAS OUT. BESIDES, WHO COULD AFFORD THE GAS? SO, WHILE MY PARENTS LOOKED FOR WORK, I PACKED UP THE HOUSE BECAUSE OF THE WHOLE FORECLOSURE THING...



By
HICK

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Broadcasting a dismay at TMJ

On the eighth day of the eighth month in the eighth year of the new century (8.08.08), WTMJ wasn't just broadcasting the opening of the Olympics -- it was vaulting its own management into competition for the Bad Boss gold medal.

That day, broadcast engineers, stagehands and other Journal Communications workers and sympathizers lined Capitol Drive in front of the WTMJ studios with banners asking "Trust TMJ4? If we can't why should you?"

During the lunch hour of the all-day informational picketing and sympathetic solidarity, fully 7 out of 10 cars and trucks passing on the busy thoroughfare honked in support of the unions.

While the NBC affiliate was telling the story of the Beijing Olympics on the air, the Milwaukee workers were at least gaining street attention for a story unlikely to get play in the major print and media outlets the company controls and indeed dominates in Milwaukee

It's hard to tell bad boss stories when your own boss has the veto, even though the experienced broadcast engineers put your own narrower preferences on the air. (Rival station Channel 12 did show up to continue its inroads in the TV market by doing local stories on workers.)

The tale the public wasn't told involves imperial unilateral action not by the Chinese government but by Journal Broadcast Group management. It created what the workers allege to federal authorities are clear violations of the law and,

on any level, a "spit in the face" to dedicated workers.

The charges go beyond the unfair practices often filed with the National Labor Relations Board. Immediate injunctive relief is being sought by the lawyer for both unions involved, Mark Sweet.

Without commercial interruption, here is the unfolding story.

The Wisconsin Broadcast Engineers, IBEW Local 715, are a pioneer local that has served from the earliest days of radio-TV expansion as the technical backbone of media here. The Journal company had been employing 44 of them at WTMJ-TV, WTMJ-DT, WTMJ-AM and WKTI-FM.

The local began negotiations with the Journal last December on a new contract but suddenly faced sweeping demands that would either eliminate or drastically change employment - in effect demolish a famous and traditionally supportive union.

Such a dispute was an unusual turnaround in 70 years of successful successor bargaining agreements with Journal Communications, but this time, negotiators say, the company seemed determined to follow a script outlined by its lawyers from the Michael Best firm.

That concern deepened in the spring when the Journal declared an impasse despite IBEW's willingness and experience in negotiating and then sought to merge the broadcast engineers with another veteran union -- Stagehands Local 18, the same IUPTE division

employing currently hundreds to put up the Harley events.

But Local 18 had a signed contract with WTMJ - and that along with other aspects of WTMJ's demands were against the law, Sweet argues in his complaint to the NLRB.

The dispute reflects to the workers the sort of arrogance of management that really is designed to break down mutual bargaining even as Congress is anxious for a changing of guard at the White House that would allow new laws to make the playing field more equal between labor and management.

A lot of such preemptive efforts to beat the voters to the punch is going around, noted Christopher Albrecht, president and business manager of Local 715. If the company wanted to explore cross-training and can present evidence of financial benefit, he noted, that is what collective bargaining is all about.

Instead Journal management is tampering with existing contracts and practices by unilaterally



Sympathetic unions joined the broadcast engineers and the stagehands in a day of informational picketing on Capitol Drive outside the Journal Communications studios.

ally implementing a merger of two distinct bargaining units, noted Albrecht. "Its goals of driving down wages in the face of the solidarity of its employees are very transparent -- tactics that can only be described as underhanded and dishonest."

The complaints to the NLRB on behalf of both the engineers and stagehands also name

Journal management, including Vice President of News Bill Berra and Tony Lucas, manager of news production.

The unions are also telling their story and updating their initiatives at their own website: www.whustrusttmj4.com.

But don't look for a link in the major newspaper.

-- Dominique Paul Noth

Corporations may have costly mistake in pushing 401-style pension plans

Companies may have goofed big-time by dumping the guaranteed pension system. Many private employers dismantled that union-supported concept, believing it would save money to abandon defined-benefit pensions (DB) in favor of riskier defined contribution (DC) plans like 401(k)s that put the responsibility for retirement security on the workers.

But a new independent study shows that defined-benefit plans can provide the same level of retirement income at a 46% lower cost.

That's because defined-benefit plans have certain built-in fea-

The full text is available under the Take Action section of milwaukeeelabor.org.

tures that make them the most fiscally efficient to provide retirement income, including the pooling of the risks to a large numbers of individuals and a more diverse investment strategy.

The study, "A Better Bang for the Buck: The Economic Efficiencies of Defined-Benefit Pension Plans," was released in mid-August by the National Institute on Retirement Security.

The study "is somewhat of a myth buster when it comes to conventional wisdom on the cost of retirement plans," said NIRS Executive Director Beth Almeida.

The analysis clearly indicates that the qualities inherent in defined-benefit plans -- particularly the pooling of risks and assets -- fuel their fiscal efficiency. Importantly, the report provides a new lens for policymakers, employers and employees, who are all struggling to ensure adequate retirement income with the fewest dollars possible.

Most union-negotiated pension plans are defined-benefit pension plans, which for decades have guaranteed retirees a fixed monthly income. These DBs are usually funded entirely by employers through tax-exempt contributions and automatically cover all qualified employees.

In defined-contribution plans (DCs), the retirement benefits depend upon the amount contributed to an individual worker's account and investment earnings on that account.

Since 1978, the number of defined-benefit plans plummeted from 128,041 covering some 41% of private-sector workers to only 26,000 today, according to the nonpartisan Employee Benefit Research Institute.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics finds that now only 21% of workers in the private sector have the DBs, defined-benefit pensions.

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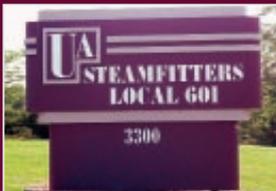
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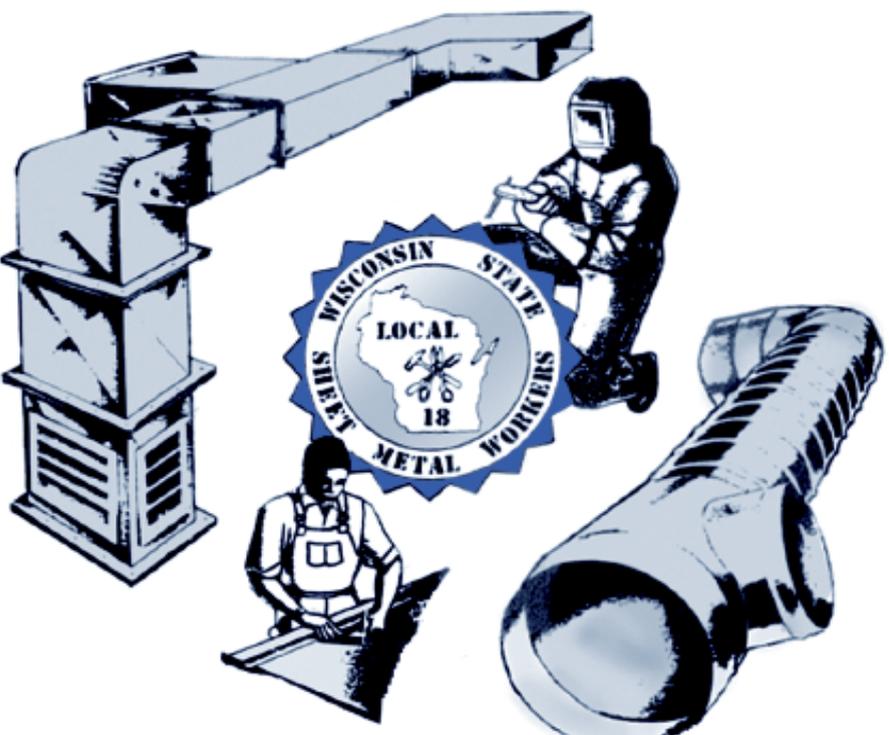
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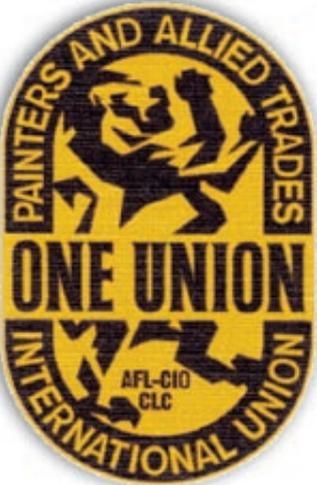
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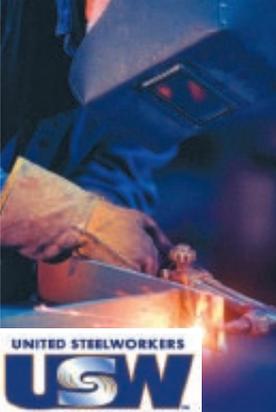
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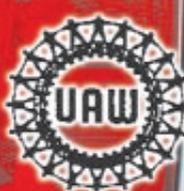
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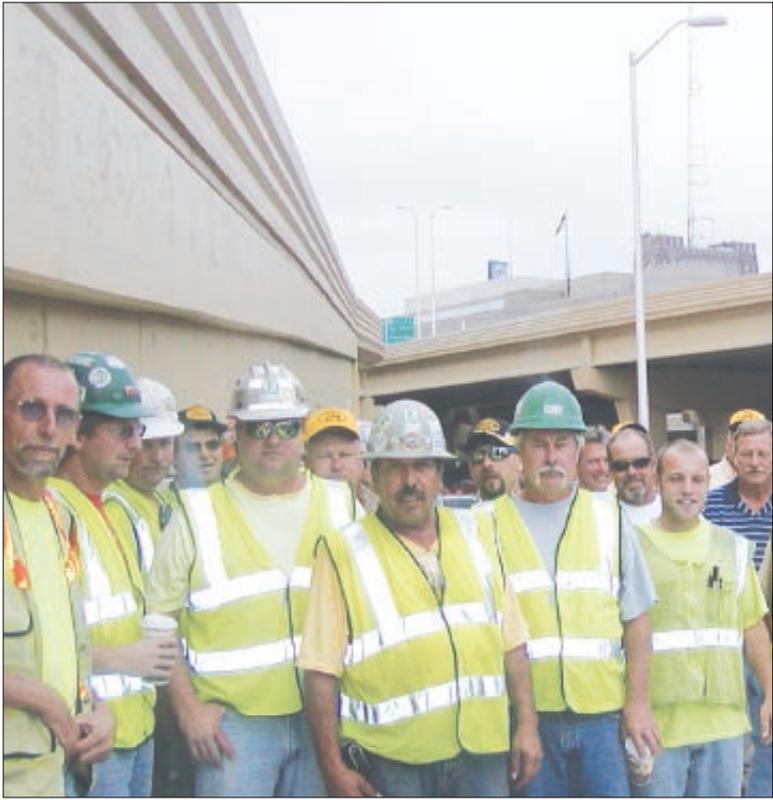
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Applause caps unions' Interchange ballet



BELOW: Unions proved the key, as several of the safety experts and engineering gurus pointed out as they grabbed early morning coffee at the ceremony. Quality preparation meant there were no debilitating injuries, noted one worker, a remarkable safety record -- "and no civilian was injured either."



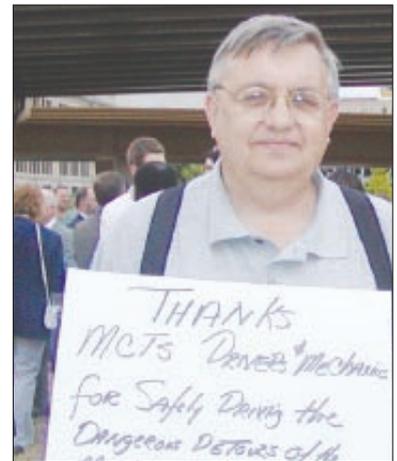
MILLIONS UNDER BUDGET and months under the predicted date of completion, the Marquette Interchange was formally opened August 19 with a ribbon cutting by Gov. Doyle (top) and a few of the proud 4,000 workers in attendance (top left).

THEY WERE JUST SOME of the 500 construction trades specialists maneuvering 45 cranes, tons of earth, bridge climbs and underpass rappelling. It represented 2.3 million work hours, 21% done by minorities, 3% by women, all union or prevailing wage. The four year marathon wound up esthetically pleasing -- and a national standard of what public works projects can do.

THIS WAS NOT A CASE of Simon Legree whipping the slaves, noted one contractor. It was union apprentice programs that helped train new workers with the state Department of Transportation. It was union training centers and attitudes that were counted on. It worked

because the expert workers had the freedom to offer suggestions, stop in case of danger and speed things along. **GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE** of union standards to the financial and building success, it did strike several union leaders in attendance that many media stories, including Journal Sentinel, did not say out loud the word "union."

"WELL, YOU HAVE to consider the source, but heck, it's too great a day to quibble," said Lyle Balistrieri, president of the Milwaukee Building & Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO.



TOP: Of the 250 participants at the opening, one was a thankful bus driver, Jerry Papa, with a sign recalling how the Amalgamated Transit Union drivers for the county, Local 998, had to maneuver the construction for four years, without mishap.

LEFT: Paid mainly with federal funds, the project was run by Frank Busalacchi and the state DOT. So many state legislators took a deserved bow, including Pedro Colon who has a Sept. 9 primary contest looming. See Page 7.



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Protect the vote, with popcorn no less

Wisconsin's election system is smartly handled and claims of organized voter fraud only reveal that the system and voting drive organizers work quickly to expose any misdoings.

So noted the experts gathered July 24 for the Protect Wisconsin's Voter Education Summit organized by the Institute for One Wisconsin and emceed by its executive director, Scot Ross (below left).



It was held at the Times Theater July 24 with free popcorn for a crowd that included a major decision maker on elections, Kevin Kennedy, the experienced head of the state's new combined oversight board, the Government Accountability Office.

The amusing videos and



sometime scary stories from the panelists did reveal the importance of always keeping a non-partisan watch on the goings on.

Among the panelists: Sheila D. Cochran, chief operating officer of the MALC; Renee Shavers Crawford, associate director of the ACLU of Wisconsin; Alan Freed, an attorney for Disability Rights Wisconsin; Kit O'Meara of the League of Women Voters, and Christine Neumann-Ortiz of Voces de La Frontera.

Ann Jacobs, attorney of the Election Protection Legal Committee, offered some cautionary tales while Susan Edman (left), executive director of the Milwaukee Election Commission, discussed how the City Hall office actually functions but also relies on the community's attentiveness.



Surrounded by food and craft booths, the Union Label Booth at the State Fair Expo Center often drew a significant stay-awhile crowds to buy Harley raffle tickets or pick up union-made freebies. Booth organizer Willie D. Ellis, president of MALC and also organizer for Operating Engineers Local 139, got to thank volunteers from his own union for their shift: (from left) Russell R. Retzack, David Sohns and Donald Frederick.

LABOR DAY

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Laborfest 2008

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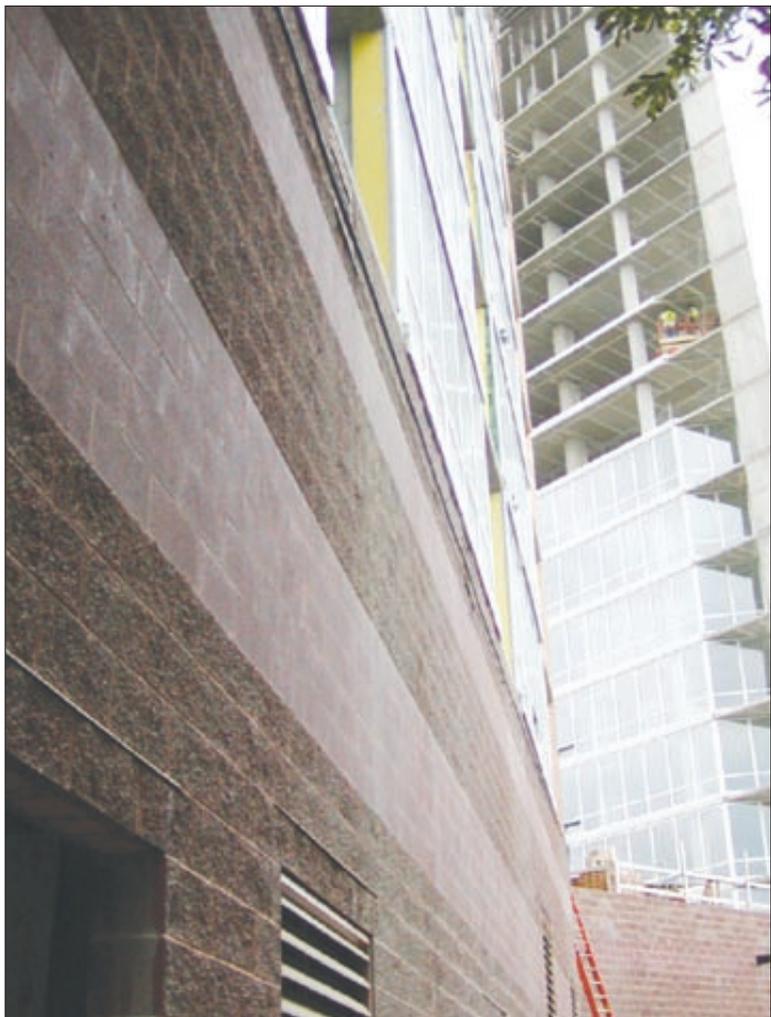
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For knowledgeable East Siders, the topping off ceremony for Park Lafayette July 25 (right) holds a special place in Milwaukee's blitz of condo building. Crowds of workers showed up to sign the commemorative plaque. For decades this was an ungainly hole in the ground at Prospect Ave. and Lafayette Place. What could fit in this strange one-acre space? It turns out that advanced architecture (below) created a two tower condominium of 20 stories and 280 luxury units, with seven layers of underground parking – all union built by Hunzinger contractors for Renaissance Development Group, and actually using union investment funds.



And here's another big construction job done – all union, all notable

St. Philip Randolph Institute

Celebrating Labor Day

With Our Union Brothers & Sisters

From the Executive Board and Members of
A. Philip Randolph Institute, Milwaukee Chapter



“Freedom is never given, it is won.”

MILWAUKEE TEACHERS' EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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Mayor Barrett and Obama campaign's Tim Mahon (right) talk with union members and publicized a new radio ad pointing out McCain's disregard for American products such as Harleys. The site was the parking lot at the building & construction trades council.

RIGHT: Rep. Gwen Moore lays out her long-held belief in Obama for union leaders such as Lyle Balistrieri at Yatchak Hall. She and Barrett were early ardent supporters of the Illinois senator.



A day before its formal opening as the downtown nerve center of three dozen campaign headquarters in Wisconsin, workers went Andy Warhol-ish, spreading Barack Obama's face around the floor. The cavernous offices, which opened with festivities Aug. 20 emceed by Sheila Cochran, looks out from 4th St. and Wells St. at the Midwest Airlines Center (right).



Enjoying Obama

They're hardly novices in the trench wars of politics and legislations. If anything they are hardened survivors. So it's unusual to hear these experienced officials who have long supported him speak mainly of the joy and spirit that Obama has brought to their public service.

One brought in by the Obama campaign to visit with Wisconsin union leaders was Margaret Blackshere, the former head of the Illinois AFL-CIO, a legendary master of legislation, a fighter for feminism who has been an Obama supporter from the get-go.

Another, US Rep. Gwen Moore, rose to attention as Obama did from a reputation for accomplishment as a state legislator. Though she was updating union leaders on her efforts in D.C., she couldn't escape discussing her belief in Obama and certainly couldn't avoid talking about the increasingly silly campaign against him

Blackshere saw Obama in action for workers from his early days as a community organizer in Chicago, helping families suffering through steel mill closures. Even then she noted his innovative response to problems and the fact that "he truly listens to union issues - this caring for workers is genuine."

"I find it amazing, really, that his opponent tries to discount" his years in the Illinois legislature, she said. She saw him emerging there and actually credits him with coming up with helpful ideas as well as pushing labor causes.

"Here (at the state level) you still have lobbyists, but not to the same degree. You have to think through legislation; you have to act on instinct and then legislate with care," she said. She can still rattle off the ideas he backed or innovated and how he worked across the aisle, especially helping low-income workers.

Moore detailed some beliefs in Congress she'll never stop fighting for ("Universal health care, AND mental health parity . . . Foreign policy? Let's start exporting our values, not just democracy").

Turning to the election, Moore ducked a questioner's concerns about vestiges of racism emerging in the race. She focused on "Americans being too smart." She dismissed McCain's efforts as simply trying "to fool us again - I think people are hurting too much now to fall for the old games," and she particularly noted the attempt in TV commercials to take the subtleties of Obama's nonpartisan approaches and turn them into negative sound-bites. After eight years of Bush, she said, "Don't mess with us again." -- D.N.

Labor Day



*a day to rest,
a day to renew the fight for all that others have gained for us,
a day to determine what we want to leave for others.*

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Since November 30, 1895

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LABOR DAY

**OURS
IS ALSO**

**A LABOR
OF
LOVE**



Milwaukee
POLICE
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Local #21 IUPA-AFL-CIO

Speech here, D.C. there

After visiting Milwaukee to give a breakfast talk (right), senior economist Jared Bernstein of the Economic Policy Institute found himself back in D.C. testifying before the joint economic committee of Congress (both houses) on the array of economic forces that are squeezing working Americans' incomes and living standards. To help counter those forces and provide some immediate relief, Bernstein has called for a better second stimulus package, preferably in the form of state fiscal aid and public investment in needed infrastructure, such as highway and school repairs. The investments would keep more Americans working and contributing through any downturn, Bernstein noted. He also advocated strengthening oversight of the financial sector to provide long-term protection from the kinds of bubbles that have buffeted the US economy.



Labor 2008

From Page 1

the wealthy, the favoritism to big oil and big business and the failed approach to Social Security, Medicare and health insurance? Surely that will become obvious as the election approaches.

So I thought - until I connected to the barrage of emails, the echo chambers of conservative radio, the planted series of criticism and derision.

I saw even Obama supporters affected by the sheer volume of the falsehoods. From "transparent" the lies had moved to "where there's smoke there's fire." Even if it's just smog.

And there's still more:

Has-been celebrities finally able to get airtime by sneering at Obama.

Books that paint any Chicago politician as belonging to the era of Capone and repeating what are clearly racist and religious lies.

Whispers even among gun owners. The curious charge of elitism because Obama can think on his feet and speaks well.

It all may not add up to a hill of beans, but now McCain is using the entire apparatus of lobbyists and moneymen that did this to him (!) in 2000 and did it to Kerry in 2004.

On the Internet, which is sometimes a world of preaching to those already in the choir, a veritable industry has developed to forage for new email recipients for the smears, which has created an often amusing counter-industry of videos exposing the mendacity of Fox News and other supposed factual sources.

Among the best is foxattacks.com/virus/ -- Obama supporters will laugh until they cry, and each video ends with the headline "Pssst - do something!"

Any doubts I have had about Labor 2008's initial mission evaporated.

Now I wonder if it is enough.

So I'm happy to see more pointed excursions.

One of those comes from the Milwaukee Area Labor Council the same evening the GOP convention handles McCain's acceptance speech.

From 4-8 p.m. that Thursday, Sept. 4, Labor 2008 will answer with facts and a food fight! This Labor 2008 walk features a chili cook-off between the council's president, Willie D. Ellis, and its secretary-treasurer, Sheila D. Cochran, at Yatchak Hall, 633 S. Hawley Road

Labor 2008 is pursuing more volunteers for these important member-to-member strolls, but

The AFL-CIO has put together a video-rich website for Wisconsin. Emphasizing local events and union personalities, it is labor2008.typepad.com/wi/



Steve Kwaterski of the AFL-CIO and Stephanie Bloomingdale of the Wisconsin Nurses and Health Professionals, AFT, lead a Labor 2008 training session for union enthusiasts -- one of several such sessions held around the state to learn how personal neighborhood contact strengthens workplace fliers and phone banking.

so enthusiastic and busy is the Obama Campaign for Change that you'll find many union members happily doing double-duty, visiting union households one day and then joining the Obama teams to visit any household.

Both projects share similar enthusiasms and realizations, one of which is the importance of the labor grassroots model.

The Obama campaign in the state has devoted more than a dozen of its members simply to

labor.

Both Obama's campaign and the AFL-CIO campaign have also created teams of military veterans who honor McCain's service but don't want to see his policies burden their families.

The Milwaukee Building & Construction Trades Council lent its headquarters to Obama's team to unveil the recent radio ad that points out McCain's stance against Harleys and other American products. See photo opposite page.

It was an effective ad that

forced even conservative talk show hosts to admit its accuracy.

Even with three dozen offices around the state, the Obama campaign and the Wisconsin Democratic Party decided to center its state efforts in this big Milwaukee Downtown office across the street from the Midwest Airlines Center.

It is, in fact, at the corner of Wells St. and 4th St. where vin-

tage cars and Harley motorcycles will gather in anticipation of the Laborfest parade Sept. 1.

The Obama team invited Wisconsin's three noted early backers of Obama to christen the space: Gov. Doyle, Mayor Barrett and Rep. Moore. But to emcee the event at 744 N. 4th St. on Aug. 20, it chose a local labor leader -- Cochran.

Measures of success

As the media remains amazed by the range of volunteers, money and personal activity of the Obama direct forces, it has neglected the potency of the union member-to-member campaign.

ALF-CIO staff did some counting at the end of July to measure Labor 2008 in support of Obama and the legislation he has promised to sign and most Democrats in Congress support -- the Employee Free Choice Act. What the staff recorded at that time:

- 4,391,585 worksite fliers distributed;
 - 70,000 union members visited by a fellow union activist at their home;
 - 40,000 local union letters downloaded from the Working Families Toolkit;
 - 135 rapid action events;
 - 1,053 union activists trained.
- In addition, the AFL-CIO noted:
- 129 Locals have passed resolutions in support of the Employee Free Choice Act;
 - Members have already signed 300,000 of the Million Member Mobilization Cards in support of the Employee Free Choice Act.
 - Officials in local races are being presented with poll and survey proof that nearly 60,000,000 people -- more than half of US workers -- say they would join a union right now if they could;
 - Labor forces have made it possible for 300,000 message calls to be dialed per day;
 - Even better, 400,000 GOTV message calls (Get Out the Vote) can be dialed per day;
 - 2.1 million union members are veterans being urged to respect

John McCain's military record but support Ocala's proven support for veteran issues, veteran benefits and economic common sense.

Surveys also indicated as of July 25 that McCain's favorable ratings with union members had gone down more than 21 points. The AFL-CIO Voting Record for Sen. Barack Obama, incidentally, is 98%.

Aside from the presidential races, unions are actively playing a role in more than 500 races nationwide.

Included are 61 US House races (including Rep. Steve Kagen's bid for re-election in the Green Bay area):

- 11 US Senate races;
- 4 Governor races;
- 434 State Legislature races

The most important number may well be that more than 12 million union members nationwide are being actively recruited to understand the issues and support union candidates.

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To get involved contact the AFL-CIO Southeast Wisconsin political coordinator Steve Kwaterski at 414-476-2896 or email skwaters@labor2008.org.

Laborfest

From Page 1

between 3rd and 4th, for where the marchers gather and the gigantic vehicles must finish assembly by 9:30 a.m. to help the parade marshals prepare smoothly.

Other things are happening besides lining up trucks. Unions are handing out their special logo T-shirts, readying the banners, preparing flatbeds for children and retirees, and realizing - sometimes in shock -- just how big the union movement is in Milwaukee.

• WMCS 1290 will be conducting interviews all morning from the gazebo in the park. The radio station picks up again at the Summerfest grounds in the afternoon.

• An ecumenical prayer service sets the tone of thanks at 9 a.m. Organized by the Faith Community for Worker Justice and open to all, it will again take place at Postal Workers Hall, 417 N. 3rd St.

Of course, if you ride a Harley, you can lead the parade as hundreds of union members do. But even if you don't ride a Harley, you can win one at the close of Laborfest. Tickets for the Sportster and the cash prizes -- two for \$5 - will continue to be sold on the grounds.

Vintage American-made cars follow right behind the Harleys and before the color guards in this orchestrated parade. Literally orchestrated. Up front is the float of the entertainment unions - actors and stagehands accompanying the musicians who flourish show tunes all along the route.

When unions and their families and partners kick off down Wisconsin Avenue promptly at 11 a.m., they have to be invited in advance. Insurance regulations require such permission for



all units. Rules of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council also require political candidates (who are free to roam at Summerfest) to be invited to march by an accompanying union.

But while marching in the parade requires an invite, Laborfest itself is open to all the Milwaukee community for free and each year attracts hundreds of families who just want a good time on the holiday organized labor helped create but doesn't pretend to own.

At Maier Festival Park (Summerfest to newcomers), there is a 30-year Laborfest lakefront history, as well as several surprises among all manner of entertainment from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

This is still the festival without admission charge, with shows for the children supervised by the Milwaukee Public Schools, where pro wrestlers make you forget the Olympics (well, almost) and Reynaldo and his squad of quick-sketch artists draw out your inner self.

But don't look for food ticket booths. Those bargain tickets were passed out in advance by union leaders, eliminating an entire set of waiting lines for food and drink.

(The 10% discounts provided by the tickets are still available, but only through your union or local's leaders.)

The vendors are directly taking cash (and some credit cards) and ATMs are available on the grounds. That should speed things along.

So will the raffles you must attend to win -- toys and sports memorabilia for children, dinner and hotel packages for adults. Those require names stuck in raffle boxes scattered around the



As last year, some things reflect honored Laborfest tradition. Such as the float of professional musicians, proud members of American Federation of Musicians Local 8, who manage impeccable music even as they bump along the route in a flatbed . . . Such as the care and attention so many unions show their retirees (below), finding a way to include them in the parade.



grounds, with winners announced during the afternoon so the children especially don't have to wait until the festival's end to win something.

This year the dance music is virtually nonstop with two big bands taking turns at the Miller Stage (where the Harley winning ticket is also announced at festival's end).

Spider George and the Web, formed back in the mid-1980s and led by George Busateri, has tirelessly rocked labor's house for years with its diverse range

of oldies and a mighty brass section.

This is also the third year for Night Life (once known as Resonance and moved to the Miller Stage to alternate with Spider George), providing several vocalists and instrumentalists led by pianist David Brady.

Bingo (appropriately in the Potawatami area), special displays from generous unions and corporate sponsors, fire and police units, corporate mascots and strolling performers - and look out for those strolling politi-

cians! - still serve as attractions.

Weather permitting (the workers run South to help in case of a hurricane), visitors can also get high (in the air) on the bucket trucks. These are the We Energies repair cranes that have been so busy all summer because of floods and storms, but they hope to be set up north of the children's area, courtesy of IBEW Local 2150. The operators of the bucket trucks ask those who can afford it for a \$1 charity donation.

The parade's "Cruise Show" of vintage cars will again be on display on the north end of Summerfest.

Dead center on the grounds are the sitting areas and resting spots around the Union Industry Tent, where partners and locals offer special displays and information, plus samples of their work.

As you enter the main gate, look for new interactivity in the Pullman Porters Exhibit (see Page 21).

Freed this year from food ticket duty, volunteer can help out during the afternoon. Look for the people with badges or bright safety nets or driving the special carts at both the parade and the festival itself.

Once again, Laborfest sponsors are counting on volunteers to set up the grounds, then dash to Zeidler Park to help coordinate the parade -- and then at 5 p.m. help take down the banners and chairs. Meetings have been held all summer to choreograph the sequence but more helpers are always needed. Contact Robin at (414) 771-7070.

Two labor councils - those of Washington and Ozaukee counties - have merged into the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, main sponsor of Laborfest in close cooperation with the Waukesha County Labor Council.

Chief organizers of the day are the officers, staff and executive council of MALC, led by Secretary-Treasurer Sheila D. Cochran.

Next year this central labor council will celebrate the 50th year of its formation under the AFL-CIO.

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It's about the kids



A new attraction is licking its lips at the fountain near the Main Gate. It's intended for children (though likely to frighten some adults) willing to enter the mouth of the tiger.

The Sabre-Tooth Tiger Slide is a colorful and scary-looking addition to the activities for children, which grow each year of this family festival. Most of those occur around the children's area stage, but with playgrounds and finger-painting and family sit-down areas, the children's side of Laborfest has definitely expanded.

With supervision provided by the Milwaukee Public Schools recreation division, a full schedule has been worked out to combine stage shows and appearances on the grounds of clowns, jugglers and magicians. Among the performers:

Magician Glen Gerard.
Shows from Ken Head's "Heads Up Juggling Revue."
Matthew the Magician, alias Mathew Morgan.

"Mom the Clown" & Company (also providing face painting).

"The Pocket Lady" (Kathleen Mohr), providing stories and activities.

And look up! No - look higher. Look even higher! That's Debra Davis, the stiltwalker extraordinaire who performs around the grounds after strutting the entire parade route.

BELOW: Cameras snapping regularly clearly bugged these young marchers.

Photos from 2007 Laborfest were taken by AFT's Sue Ruggles and Labor Press' Dominique Paul Noth.



Some children walk the parade. Some find a way to ride the parade. And many find willing fathers to carry them the distance.

BELOW: We'll let you in on a Laborfest secret. The so-called children's stage with its sophisticated jugglers and magicians draws a lot more than toddlers.



New attraction for more than train buffs

New technology will tell an old story of the civil rights era and struggles at Laborfest this year. It is the Pullman Porters Exhibit from the National Railroad Museum.

In July 2007, the National Railroad Museum began to look for ways to enhance the interactive capabilities of a proposed Pullman Porters exhibit. Working with animation specialists at Balance Studios in Green Bay, the museum began to develop a three-dimensional avatar (computer representation of a person) based upon a real-life porter named Emanuel Hurst.

Using 3D animation software and MULE - Balance's proprietary rendering application - artists from Balance Studios re-created Hurst based upon historic photographs. Combined with facial motion-capture technology and Balance's data-mapping soft-

ware, a three dimensional version of Hurst, capable of interfacing with visitors, was born. The pairing of the avatar with the historic railcars provides visitors with a unique museum experience.

An interactive touch screen kiosk will offer visitors an opportunity to discover more about the Pullman porter history. Visitors may listen to music written and performed by porters, and learn how they influenced the development of American blues.

The story of the Pullman Porters reminds us of the towering efforts of ordinary men and women who succeeded in bringing this country closer to realizing its cherished democratic ideals.

During Laborfest, this exhibit will be located in one of the buildings to the south of the Main Gate of the Summerfest grounds.

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Has election left you fighting for facts?

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

There's nothing more disconcerting or angering than someone who confidently spouts a piece of data that seems to destroy your view of an issue - and then sits back defying you to contradict them. As if you could know instantly if their data is correct. As if there were an encyclopedia you could leaf through on the spot to refute the viewpoint.

I've seen professional campaign workers for John McCain and Barack Obama stumble when thrown up against such random facts by a know-it-all not willing to listen to opposition reasoning. We've all heard talk radio that lives on such techniques - and cuts off any intelligent dispute.

The Internet is alive with thinly disguised hate messages that string together unrelated "facts," make historical judgments over half-truths and use random pieces of data to offer a convincing yet false case.

The Take Action section of www.milwaukeeelabor.org, our website, now includes full reports from outside experts as well information from unions.

Many of us are unthinkingly guilty of such behavior. Recently I dropped a little aside during a dinner conversation -- that while the US imports some 66% of its oil, less than 12% of our imports comes from Persian Gulf states.

Other guests were agitated beyond belief. How can that be? 12%! Given our cost in blood and treasure? Surely I'm nuts? (Well, that's a different issue.)

No, my figures are right. Most people don't know that Canada and Mexico are our largest importers and that many other nations are involved. But it's a body blow if you have framed oil as the center of our Mideast policy. Our ignorance about oil is one more item in a complex series of attitudes and

events that foolishly led this administration to war in the first place. 12% alone is not enough to explain all that. It just lights up the argument about how the public has been misled for years.

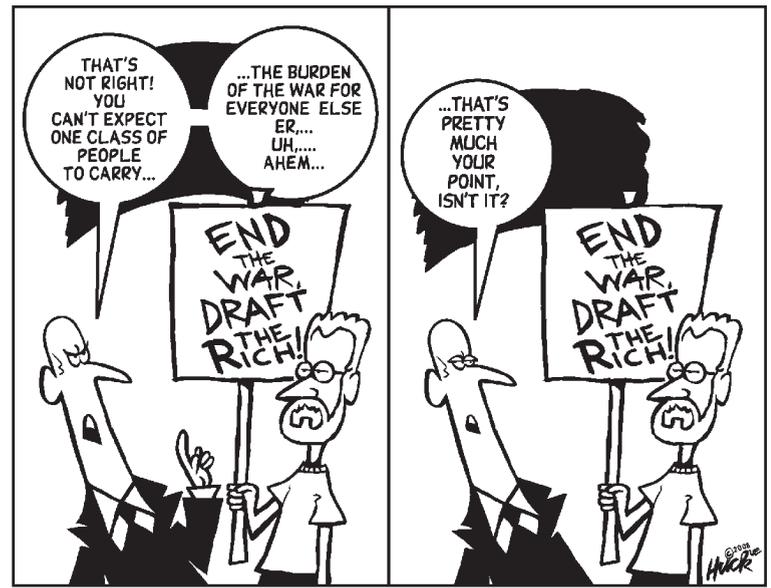
So who do we trust?

Our confusion over facts mounts given the complexities of all the issues facing us as well as a new president. We are so deep in the hole that no one can easily pull us out and we do have to think our way out. Our tendency to accept information out of context, to not investigate, mainly hurts candidates who engage in nuances rather than flag-waving extreme sound-bites. To me the thinker is Obama and the emotional over-reach is McCain, but saying that is not enough to demonstrate that.

Citizens may like to believe otherwise, but candidates don't need to speak the truth in TV commercials. They should but there's no quick penalty if they don't. So prattling back at the dinner table the supposed "facts" in a TV ad doesn't mean a thing. We need whole views and comparisons - unless we're willing to vote like our parents did or even how we did four years ago.

Digging deeper is one reason the Take Action segment of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council's website is devoting this election year to comprehensive reports from outside experts that provide not just figures but understanding.

These are the meaningful comparison that have a progressive leaning but they put the reasoning and the history right out there and carefully.



These are not the distractions and petty concerns that call to mind columnist Paul Krugman's suggestion for a new GOP slogan: "Real men don't think things through."

At present the studies in the Take Action section include:

BUSHONOMICS - It is rare that a report cites what's wrong with our current economy by conjuring up an old foe of organized labor, Henry Ford. But Ford at least saw the devastation for democratic capitalism if it paid so poorly that he didn't have customers. The loss of that simple common sense is a good place to start looking and understanding what went wrong with our economic policies.

Citizens may like to believe otherwise, but candidates don't need to speak the truth in TV commercials.

The Center for American Progress, with charts, photos and quick reading segments, details how the basic principles of gains for both business and labor were shown the door in this "ownership" economy, how public fear of taxes produces enormous debt that sells off our country and eventually will require a reckoning.

This report provides a lot of the facts and connections for people seeking to understand what happened to the United States -- and what will continue to happen unless we change our ways.

HEALTH CARE - There may be no starker contrast between McCain and Obama than their approaches to providing health care for the nation, and the differences are certainly not as simplistic as they have been painted. For instance, McCain's approach may cost less over 10 years but it actually costs more in its first year than the Obama plan - and still doesn't cover most of the uninsured.

Obama's plan is not -- despite the commercials suggesting otherwise -- seeking to dismantle the entire current health system and turn it over to the government. It outlines a sophisticated marriage between the public and private sectors on the road toward universal health care.

The Brookings Institution Tax Policy Center did the study and the Economic Policy Institute has detailed the differences in a factual side-by-side 5-page summary.

Also available in Take Action are the AFL-CIO fact sheets on Obama's plans for education and to employ construction unions to rebuild our infrastructure.

And given the vicious distortions in Jerome Corsi's book about Obama, Take Action also offers the full "Unfit for Publication" report that step by step exposes the misstatements and deliberate distortions of a discredited author notorious for his previous work as a political smear artist.

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NEA Kenosha also AFL-CIO

On Aug. 6, the Santa Maria Elementary (Calif.) Education Association, the Kenosha Education Association, and the Professional Staff Union in Massachusetts announced their affiliations with the AFL-CIO. The AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting in Chicago noted that the affiliation of the NEA locals will encourage greater cooperation to meet the needs of working teachers, students and their families.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney presented certificates of affiliation to the presidents of the associations. He was joined in the ceremony by National Education Association (NEA) President-elect Dennis Van Roekel and American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President Randi Weingarten.

Noting that "teachers and education professionals are being assaulted by the lack of funding for public education," Sweeney said, "Today's affiliation means greater collaboration. We're pleased that working families are coming together to advance the right of every student to attend a quality public school."

The affiliation will also boost cooperation among union members in the fight for health care, retirement security, and good jobs.

The affiliation comes as part of a groundbreaking agreement between the national AFL-CIO and the National Education Association allowing for local associations of the NEA to affiliate directly with the AFL-CIO.

The Labor Solidarity Partnership is supported by AFT, a long-time AFL-CIO affiliate. To date, more than 12,000 NEA members across the country have joined the AFL-CIO through the partnership. The Kenosha teachers are the first new NEA unit in Wisconsin to join the AFL-CIO.

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employees organization, representing 3.2 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators and students preparing to become teachers.

The AFL-CIO is the nation's largest organization for working families, with 56 affiliated unions representing 10.5 million men and women.

Weingarten, who just won election to head the AFT's 1.4 million member union, was one of three new members elected to the AFL-CIO executive council, which also honored four retiring members.

Also new are Matthew Loeb, president of the 110,000-strong Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) and Jill Levy, president of the School Administrators (AFSA).

Retiring are former AFT President Ed McElroy, who served on the council for seven years, and former AFT Secretary-Treasurer Nat LaCour, along with retiring IATSE President Tom Short and Baxter Atkinson, a former AFSA president.

Global union plays hardball

By James Parks
AFL-CIO Correspondent

In a global economy where multinational companies operate across borders, unions are developing global strategies to better represent their members and sustain the middle class.

In July the United Steelworkers (USW) and Unite, Britain's largest union, took a giant step in that direction by formally joining together to form the world's first global union.

The new union, dubbed Workers Uniting: The Global Union, will draw on the energies of the two unions' more than 3 million active and retired workers from the United States, Canada, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. The members work in virtually every sector of the global economy, including manufacturing, service, mining and

New book exposes duplicity in who was a 'terrorist'

After reviewing in depth the cases of 517 of the Guantanamo detainees, a study conducted by attorneys and law students at the Seton Hall University Law School "concluded that only 8% were alleged to have associated with Al Qaeda."

"Fifty-five percent were not alleged to have engaged in any hostile act against the United States at all, and the remainder were charged with dubious wrongdoing, including having tried to flee US bombs. The overwhelming majority -- all but 5% -- had been captured by non-US players, many of whom were bounty hunters."

All this is recorded in "The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned Into a War on American Ideals."

The quotes are by the author, Jane Mayer, a noted writer whose articles regularly appear in The New Yorker.

Another noted columnist, regularly syndicated Bob Herbert, noted these conclusions and how the book contrasts Mayer's investigation to the views of Donald Rumsfeld that dominated the media when he was the much believed Secretary of Defense who described the bulk of detainees at Guantanamo as "the worst of the worst."

Herbert calls Mayer's book one of the most important in the series of historic publications that have sought to describe how the media and the public were duped in the years after 9/11.

transportation.

USW President Leo Gerard and Unite General Secretary Derek Simpson signed the agreement in a transatlantic ceremony broadcast live at the USW convention in Las Vegas.

"This union is crucial for challenging the growing power of global capital," says Gerard.

"Globalization has given financiers license to exploit workers in developing countries at the expense of our members in the developed world. Only global solidarity among workers can overcome this sort of global exploitation wherever it occurs."

While the two unions will remain largely autonomous, they will have a joint leadership to coordinate common policy and collective bargaining. The two unions represent workers at some of the same companies in diverse countries and will be able to coordinate bargaining.

Noted Simpson: "The political and economic power of multinational companies is formidable. They are able to play one nation's workers off against another to maximize profits. They do the same with governments, hence the growing gap between the rich and the rest of us. With this agreement, we can finally begin the process of closing that gap."

The genesis of Workers Uniting came in April 2007 when the USW, Amicus (the largest manufacturing union in the United Kingdom), and the United Kingdom's Transport and General Workers' Union (T&G) agreed to set up joint committees to move toward forming a global union.

In May 2007, Amicus and T&G merged to form Unite.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney has hailed the agreement as "a bold and innovative approach to addressing the crushing effect of corporate-driven globalization on workers and their communities."

"Together, these unions have put multinational companies on notice: Pushing down wages and working conditions for your employees by pitting one country's workforce against another will not work forever. By exploring what it would take to build the world's first trans-Atlantic union, these unions have proven themselves to be on the cutting edge of not only the global union movement, but also the future of the global workforce."

Tony Woodley, Unite's joint general secretary, summed up the importance of the new union: "There will be no more no-go areas for trade unions."



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Feingold helps Working America take off

After quietly going door to door for several weeks seeking out workers who lack union strength on the job, Working America on Aug. 4 dedicated its office in a former Riverwest bar and signed up its 25,000 and 1st member in Milwaukee--- a pretty well-known hard-worker named Russ Feingold.

The US senator took the pledge and the red T-shirt proclaiming "Working America" to show solidarity with the goals and encourage all Wisconsinites to support this fast-growing community affiliate of the AFL-CIO, which now boasts some two million members across the nation.

In between his Kenosha listening session and a sit-down on economic policy with the Journal Sentinel, Feingold made his participation more than symbolic. He visited volunteers and canvassers at the Riverwest location and told TV cameras that only by uniting worker voices, union or not, can "we gain the power to change policy."

"My colleagues in Washington need to hear from you and hear your stories," he said.

Working America is offering opportunity to workers who would love the benefit of unionization on the job but can't yet get it. Meanwhile they can use this program to work toward that

goal, gain several union benefits and join the campaigns for a better, more secure country.

Over two years, Working America has established itself in 11 states and 20 cities, Milwaukee now among them. The 15 canvassers here have already signed up 25,000 working people not unionized at work. Now, through Working America, they can participate in common challenges - such as the policies that lead to good jobs, affordable health care, world-class education, secure retirements, real homeland security.

The policies and tools available to Working America members are pragmatic and progressive for communities. The members work against the "wrong-headed priorities" of special interests.

The need to return America to its democratic principles, and to a belief in mutual advance for workers and business, has never been greater, Feingold noted at the press conference. He commented that in his 26 years in public office he has "never seen people hurting like today" from economic insecurity, stagnating wages and the growing gap between the ultra rich and the rest of us.

Introducing Feingold and welcoming Working America to 905 E. Center St., the state AFL-



The senator joins Working America and grabs a T-shirt.

CIO executive vice-president, Sara J. Rogers, underlined Feingold's observation with some grim statistics - 10% of Wisconsin residents living in poverty, more than 48,000 without health insurance, 28th among the states in foreclosures.

There are some 250,000 union members in Wisconsin. The presence of Working America (signing up 10% of that number in Milwaukee) may not seem enormous, but it has the potential to grow gigantic, given surveys

that consistently indicate that most workers would join a union tomorrow if the playing field was level - and given the pledge by Barack Obama that with a sufficient margin in Congress he will sign the Employee Free Choice Act.

Feingold, in fact, reminded canvassers that they were the spearheads of change. "I wouldn't have a career," he noted, were it not for the persistence of door to door effort. Back in 1982, he won his first race (for the state senate) by only a few votes and still credits that grassroots underdog spirit as the difference.

Membership is free, but all who join Working America are asked to volunteer dues of \$5 a month if they can. Every member does become a part of the AFL-CIO and thus their households can be part of Labor 2008 and other political or social programs. Nationwide, central labor councils such as the Milwaukee Area Labor Council make available

community service specialists who provide knowledgeable local sources of help.

Its busy online home, workingamerica.org, provides more than links to Union Plus and other special benefits. It offers tools with bite and even a sense of humor.

Here you will find the comprehensive Job Tracker that searches company records on exported jobs, health and safety records and worker rights.

Ask a Lawyer educates workers on employment-related issues. Ask a Working Woman provides important regular surveys. See Page 8.

The popular Bad Boss campaign, selecting the worst bosses in America, has returned to amuse readers and create hundreds of more stories in the nation's media. Joining all that is a new Word on the Street Blog that allows members to tell their own personal stories.

The majority of Working America members identify themselves as moderates or conservatives (70%). One third identify themselves as supporters of the NRA (National Rifle Association). "Born again Christians" are also the self-description of a third of the membership.

Yet they are also committed to progressive programs for the economy and the community. Two out of three people talked to door-to-door sign up.

David Wehde (pronounced "Wade"), state director for Wisconsin and four other states, notes that the Riverwest office is the first in Wisconsin. It will remain and grow long after the November 4 election.

To contact Working America here, visit 905 E. Center Street, call 414-374-8330 or email milwaukee@workingamerica.org

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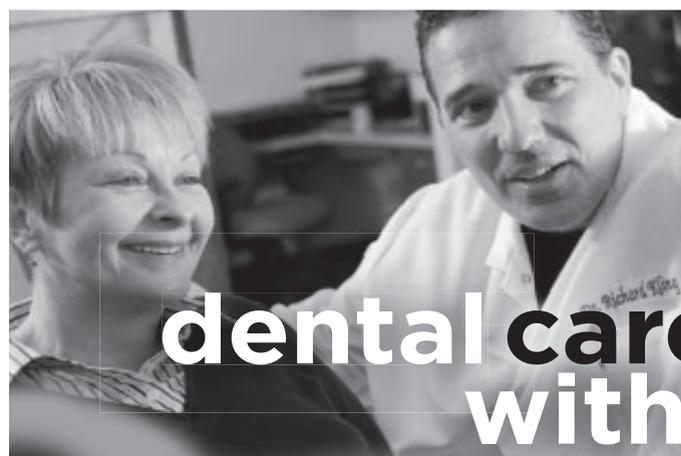


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Labor in Pulpits seeks clarity in faithful

In every faith, society is admonished about corruption, the misuse of the powerless. We are warned to reach out to the homeless, to not "take the cloak of a widow as security for a loan," to not cut every grape in the vineyard but "leave enough for the foreigner, the orphan."

These injunctions against exploitation have suffered of late, often in the name of religion.

There's a whole school of thought that the right faith can make you rich and what happens next door is your neighbor's fault, be it foreclosure, illness, age, robbery or fraud. The quiet message seems: Be careful who you help; don't respect families from other countries or other faiths. Let them work for what they can get and live wherever they can.

In contrast, Labor in the Pulpits, providing speakers on the Labor Day weekend throughout the metropolitan religious community, is emphasizing what all major faiths teach:

There is a diminishment of God's values in allowing exploitation. Fate puts good people in trouble. Our social response mirrors our religious faith.

This year, the Labor in the Pulpits speakers are better prepared than ever before to address and relate the central theme:

Homelessness and the lack of good jobs.

They're certainly related concerns. A panel of concerned speakers and a packet of remarkable quotes from all major religions were put forward Aug. 5 by faith intern Heather Robertson at a training session for participants, organized by the Faith Community of Worker Justice at Yatchak Hall, 633 S. Hawley Rd.

The panel offered examples and reflections on what is



Faith intern Heather Robertson passed out packets of useful resources and scriptural quotes at the Aug. 5 training session of Labor in the Pulpits speakers. Among the presenters was MacCanon Brown (bottom right), director of Repairers of the Breach, a full time service for the homeless.

expected of a moral community.

The packet provides down-home ammunition to the pastors, labor leaders, retirees and other speakers - disturbing examples of how society can destroy itself by not putting faith and justice into service.

It also supplies important resources to share with congregations, including social programs and community partnerships that are not some "pie in the sky" fancy but proven roads to improvement. The main advice to the speakers: Encourage reflection, not confrontation.

But who are the homeless -- beyond the statistics that they are the growing subset of the 4.4% of Wisconsin workers without a job? And what is a good job anyway -- and how do you get one, when our policies reinforce cycles of poverty?

The poor may not have the \$28 needed for an ID, which is required for a job, or the \$60 to renew a driver's license.

Milwaukee alone has 13,000 homeless children. Companies



and individuals, as described to the crowd by the director of Repairers of the Breach, MacCanon Brown, exploit the homeless by grabbing them off the street for less than legal pay or even to run out on them without paying, or even to demand sexual favors.

(No wonder the sub-theme is "Giving Respect and Dignity to All People")

Yet the stand of religion, as Methodist pastor Andy Orten reminded the crowd, is lifting people out of trouble and sharing the values of faith to do this.

The open heart explains why social justice and action trump theological nitpicking or avoidance of people who are different from us, noted Wanda Washington, pastor of Grace United Church of Christ.

Exploitation of workers is not kosher - in fact kosher food rituals should be built around the dignified treatment of workers and the most painless treatment of animals for food. So noted David Dropkin of Congregation Shir Hadash, picking up on an issue much on the mind of organized labor and the religious community.

It looks more and more like the most recent case that has flamed both sides of the immigration debate also involved the politics and money of kosher food.

Dozens from Milwaukee's faith community joined 1,200 people recently in a vigil-march of protest to Postville, Iowa, over the criminalization before deportation of 289 immigrant workers and the devastation to this town of splitting families that have long been known to be from Guatemala and Mexico (and are now being replaced by young male immigrants from Somalia!). Yet no executive from Agriprocessors (which has cornered the lucrative kosher meat brands and businesses) has been charged.

All this has given impetus in the Jewish community (whether reform, conservative, orthodox or, like Dropkin, reconstructionist) to require ethical treatment of workers to be mandated in any imprimatur of kosher food.

"We have a responsibility

here that goes beyond fair immigration laws," Dropkin said.

Catholics are not heeding John Paul's own encyclicals, noted Father Gerry Hessel of Our Lady of Divine Providence. He pointed out to listeners a series of pronouncements, including that profit is not the core reason for a business' existence.

The pope reminded us that "work is 'for man,' and never man 'for work.'" - and also that there is an important reason for unions and for accepting the Christian priority of "labor over capital," said Dressel.

When the pulpit speakers address these issues they will be well armed with information to explore and share the relationship among social policy, social needs and the commandments of faith.

More than 130 faith centers (churches, synagogues, mosques) have been contacted. More than 80 responded in the affirmative so far.

A number of speakers have been assigned. Some will also work tag-team, to handle several languages, to let the homeless make their human case alongside speakers and to connect congregants with such worker centers as Voces to La Frontera.

A list of assigned speakers, places and times will appear at www.milwaukeeelabor.org, and you can check on your own faith center's involvement by leaving a voice mail (you will be called back) at (414) 771 7541, or by emailing mclefaith@ameritech.net.

-- Dominique Paul Noth



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Even foreign firms escape taxman

Most corporations, including a large majority of foreign companies doing business in the United States, pay no income taxes, according to a report

released August 12. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that two-thirds of both American and foreign companies doing business here end up

avoiding all income tax obligations to the federal government, despite corporate sales totaling \$2.5 trillion.

According to the GAO, each year from 1998 to 2005, an average of 68% of the foreign com-

panies operating in the United States paid zero federal income taxes. During the same period, 66% of US domestic corporations paid no federal income taxes to the government.

In 2005, 28% of large foreign

companies (over \$250 million in assets or \$50 million in sales) doing business here paid no taxes, even though they reported \$372 billion in gross receipts that year.

Twenty five percent of the largest US corporations had \$1.1 trillion in gross sales in 2005 and yet paid no federal income taxes for the year.

Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) says the report is a "shocking indictment of the current tax system."

"It's shameful that so many corporations make big profits and pay nothing to support our country," he added. "The tax system that allows this wholesale tax avoidance is an embarrassment and unfair to hardworking Americans who pay their fair share of taxes. We need to plug these tax loopholes and put these corporations back on the tax rolls. It's time for the big corporations to pay their fair share."

Added Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.): "This report makes clear that too many corporations are using tax trickery to send their profits overseas and avoid paying their fair share in the United States."

Levin and Dorgan had requested the GAO study. The study was needed but it clearly intended to expose a political weakness of the Republicans, who have controlled the lawmaking that could have affected these failures to pay a fair share.

Both Democrats also noted that, despite the fact that many corporations pay no taxes, Sen. John McCain is proposing to cut the corporate tax rate. The better approach, the senators suggest, is to fix the giveaways before adding to them.

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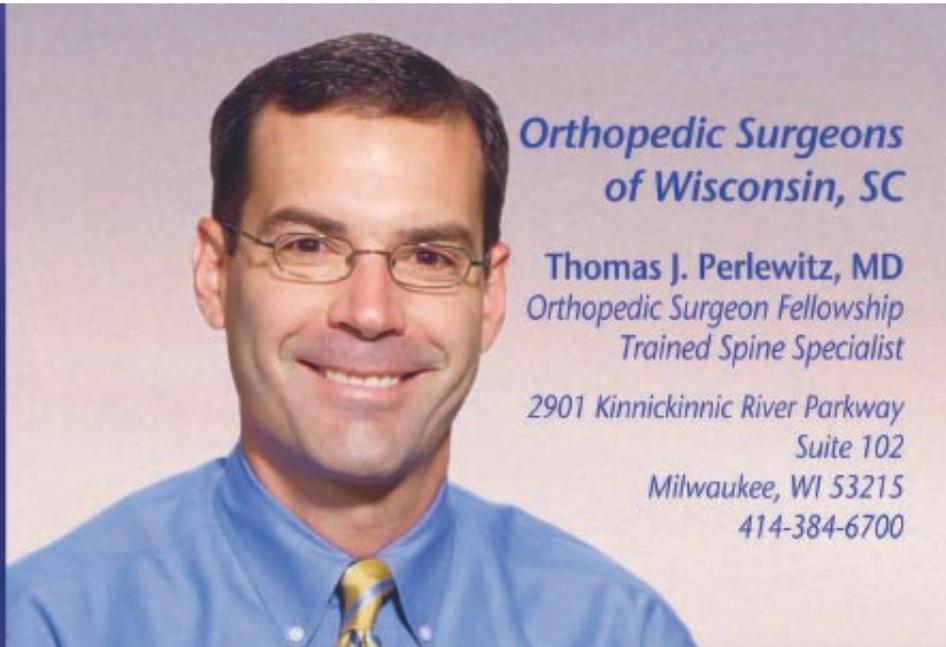
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The activists are meeting every Friday in the Third Ward. Paying attention at the polls is only one step, they argue, and a slow step while soldiers and innocent civilians are dying. Marching to face the GOP is also an answer. So union members, Peace Action advocates and Voces to La Frontera – which wants the new president to offer real immigration reform within a hundred days of taking office – were part of Witness Against the War events in late July. Here a contingent crosses the 6th St. Bridge.

Power lunch aids seniors

The Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans will hold its 13th annual Senior Power Luncheon, with Sen. Russ Feingold (D-Wis.) as the keynote speaker, on October 13 (a Monday).

At the 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. event it will also honor five Wisconsin citizens who have bettered the lives of senior citizens.

They include a statewide leader of the United Auto Workers, Ronald (Red) Platz, and the new Democratic Congressman from the Green Bay area (and veteran physician), Steve Kagen, who faces a tough election race on Nov. 4.

Others who will be honored at the event at the Wyndham - Milwaukee Airport Hotel & Convention Center (formerly Four Points), 4747 S. Howell Ave., include:

Marilyn (Mike) Nemeth, who was a kindergarten teacher before her family moved to Racine, where she became very active in local and state elections and Democratic Party leadership, and served the Wisconsin Education Association Council and its retirees. She was also a board member of the Wisconsin Council of Senior Citizens before it was merged with the Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans, which is an affiliate of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council.

Leslie (Buzz) Davis, a US Army officer from 1967-1970 (serving in South Korea) and a leader of unionizing efforts for AFT-Wisconsin and a state employee. He also led organizing for the retiree chapter of the union and served as its president.

Patricia Jerominski, the president and CEO of iCare (Independent Care Health Plan), an innovative health care model that integrates managed care with social services. A 20-year veteran of health service and administration, she has fought for an individual's right to quality health care through removing red tape and other barriers for seniors and people with disabilities.

Leon Burzynski, well known to the labor community, is president of the Wisconsin Alliance, which provides a newsletter at www.wisconsinara.org.



Sen. Feingold, who helped Working America set down roots here (see Page 24), will keynote a fund-raiser for seniors Oct. 13.

The event is the major annual fund-raiser for the Wisconsin Alliance, which works with the national ARA. It offers tables for eight for \$600 or individual lunch for \$75. Checks

should be made out to WIARA and sent to 6333 W Blue Mound Rd, Milwaukee WI 53213. The luncheon begins at 11:45 a.m. Choices are vegetable lasagna or roast sirloin of beef.



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